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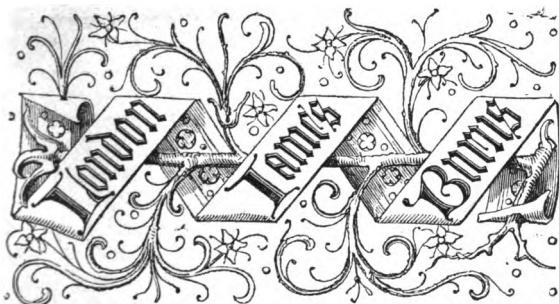
LIESLI.

K. Lauren (H) 1810



Heinrich and Blanca,  
or

The Three Brothers.



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# Liesli.



## CHAPTER I.

**I** HAD just arrived at Schwytz, from the lake of the Four-Forest Cantons (Vier-Waldstädter See); my soul was still absorbed in the recollection of the majestic and sublime scenery I had there beheld. The chapel of William Tell, the river Matte, the hut where the brave patriot had dwelt, together with the wide and glassy surface of the charming lake, surrounded with rocks ten thousand feet in height—all the appearances of this vast and majestic creation, together with the imperishable relics of past, memorable times—all continued to dwell upon my imagination.

Seating myself at the window of my inn, I beheld before me, rising and towering to the heavens above, Mount Mythen, with its double peak, and the wooden cross planted upon its highest summit. It appeared every moment as if some dreadful catastrophe, similar to that which destroyed the valley of Goldau, must sooner or later be repeated here; the ancient Mythen hung threatening over the little town, and large time-worn apertures or rents were observable in the body of the rock. By the breaking asunder of this mass in its aerial elevation, I said to myself, destruction must fall upon the devoted town, situated as it is at the foot of the rock. The longer I looked, the more did it

appear as if this ancient edifice of nature was tottering: the cross, erected by some daring hand, seemed to decline its head towards the town, as if wishing to exhort the inhabitants beneath to prepare themselves, by devotion, against the approaching hour. At length, unable to look up at the frightful rocky height, I endeavoured to banish from my mind the appalling thoughts of the possibility of such a dreadful event, and recommending my soul to God, I rambled out into the open air, in order to enjoy the beauties of the evening.

The curfew of the convent of Dominican nuns announced by its monotonous sounds that the pious sisters were offering up their prayers to Him who can restrain the waters within their limits, uphold the rocks upon their bases, and prescribe the bounds of worlds of stars on their aerial course in the heavens. With a feeling of silent admiration, and with that humility with which weak man depicts to himself the throne of his almighty Creator, I contemplated the horizon adorned by the setting sun. In the foreground arose to my view, gloomy and silent, Mount Rigi; on its summit, that seemed to touch the clouds, I beheld the great cross by which it is surmounted, still faintly gilded by the rays of the setting sun, concealed behind the mighty Alps; while at the foot of the mountain, all was night and darkness. My heart felt oppressed by some painful emotion, some earnest desire. Abandoned thus to my own reflections, and excited by some secret feeling, I turned my steps towards Siti, where, to the eastward, the rock of Fallenflue, and westward, Mount Schönbucherberg, and the Frohnalp, veiled by the grey clouds, served me as guides. Their high and ancient summits seemed to indicate their close affinity with the more exalted celestial world above; and thus feeling that I was enchained to the lower earth, I shuddered at their awful elevation. At the end of the grand avenue of trees near Siti there stands a summer-house, and to the eastward thereof a beaten path leads towards a hermitage, situated

deep within the bosom of the wood: I wished to take up my abode there for the night, if I could render myself a welcome visitor to the holy man. In my earlier years I had read much of such dwellings, and with all the romantic imagination of youth, pictured to myself, in the most lively and seducing colours, these happy, calm retreats, and their pious and peaceful inhabitants.

As yet I had never had an opportunity of beholding such a spot, and now, therefore, wished to gratify my curiosity; accordingly, I was proceeding down a declivity of the mountain, through the thickets and young brambles which opposed my descent, when my progress was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a venerable man: it was the hermit himself, who had just come from offering up his evening prayers in the chapel, some hundred paces distant from his hermitage, to which solitary spot he was now returning. I greeted him with silent respect, to which he as gravely replied.

"May I, venerable father, be allowed to enter your holy dwelling?" I inquired, modestly.

"What do you require of me, my son?" returned he, in a tone not altogether repulsive, though neither was it very friendly.

"Why, nothing particular, good father," I replied, with a smile. "I am a native of the north, travelling through your beautiful country; I have never as yet beheld either hermit or hermitage, though both have often been the subjects of my youthful meditations; I feel desirous, therefore, holy father, of now satisfying my curiosity, by passing a short and instructive hour in your society. You are wiser and more pious than we children of the world; you live in solitude and seclusion; you pass your time in pious acts of devotion; your silent prayers are not disturbed by those guilty agitations of mind to which we are too often exposed; and God is nearer to you, because you are more pure and guiltless of those misdeeds with which we too often have to reproach



ourselves. You are indeed happy, holy father, here in your retreat."

"Happy!" replied he slowly, stopping of a sudden, and casting an expressive look of grave severity towards the pale-purpled sky, which still faintly gilded the cross on the peak of Mount Rigi: "my son," he continued, after a silent pause, "hast thou ever in thy life beheld one truly happy mortal?"

I replied, that I thought I could myself lay some claim to happiness; that I had health, friends, and every thing which was calculated to make me cheerful and contented.

"And hast thou, then, no share in the afflictions of others, my son?"

To this question, which sounded so strangely in my ears, I could only reply by casting down my eyes in confusion.

"And I too," continued he, "enjoy the blessing of health; I also have my family and friends, if not here, yet in the eternal home of peace above; I too have all that I require; and yet my heart is often clouded and oppressed. The sufferings, the wants of my more unhappy neighbours too often press heavily upon me; for to me come only such unhappy beings as seek to pour into my heart those troubles and afflictions with which they are heavily laden, and under which they would otherwise sink. But tell me, thou who livest within the wide range of this world, hast thou never yet beheld a flood of tears descending down the cheek of sorrow? Hast thou never heard the troubled sigh, when issuing from the breast of affliction? Hast thou never yet experienced the painful sensation which attends the wish to help misfortune's children, while yet you are unable to do so?"

His discourse fell upon my conscience-stricken breast with a burning force, and my eyes were so fixed to the earth that I could not look up, neither dared I do so. "Who can help every one?" I exclaimed, wishing to ex-

cuse myself; "were I a very Cræsus, it would ruin and impoverish me at last!"

"You do not comprehend my meaning," he replied, sternly, "and only prove how little you have hitherto participated in the sufferings of your fellow-creatures: it is not gold that serves to alleviate affliction, for often is the beggar far happier than the man who aids and who yet himself endures anguish of mind. It is sympathy, consolation, counsel, gentleness, and patience, which you owe to your neighbour; and until you can fulfil these duties with all your zeal and strength, you cannot call yourself happy. Delay not your aid till it be demanded; as soon as you know it is required, step forward eagerly; but reckon not upon reward—you do only your duty, and need not thanks; the feeling, the consciousness of having done our duty, of having fulfilled the command of our divine Saviour, is the highest recompense we can wish to enjoy here below. God be with you!"

With these words this singular being left me; and thus I had for once beheld a hermit.

The venerable man proceeded silently towards his cell, and I saw myself forced to return again to Schwytz, or to pass the night under the canopy of heaven. Plunged in deep reverie, I endeavoured to recall the subject of my late discourse with the hermit; and I felt as if his words had awakened me from the most flattering dreams.

Silent and thoughtful, I retraced my steps homewards. I had just learned to consider life in a point of view which was to me perfectly new, but which, presenting at the same time a very uninviting and cheerless prospect, only conveyed to me dark and melancholy feelings. I was now to seek out the misery which existed amongst my fellow-creatures; to offer them my help and succour, and that without even the hope of reward, or thanks in return. I would fain have wished to persuade myself that the language of the hermit was only the result of an overheated zeal, arising from the ascetic life he led; and that though

his strict doctrine might well be put in practice by a penitent anchorite in his solitary cell, it could never be suitable for a being living in and for the world, having so many and various occupations and duties to perform : but all these evasive thoughts and arguments did not serve to tranquillise my mind ; on the contrary, I felt convinced of the truth of the venerable man's words, though it appeared to me difficult to become what he desired.

By the side of the road on the way back to my inn, I passed the principal church of the town of Schwytz, situated on a declivity. The churchyard, where, according to the laudable custom of the place, all the graves are bestrewed with flowers, may be compared to a garden, and presents a striking contrast to the melancholy abodes of the dead disfigured by tombstones and wild weeds, as in our part of the country. It was the season of the Alpine pink (*dianthus plumarius*), of which millions were blooming here in variegated colours, while their delicious odours perfumed the dusky evening air.

Seating myself on a part of the wall which surrounded the churchyard, I contemplated the lonely scene around me, where the deepest silence reigned. The living slumbered in the little town below, and here I was surrounded by the dead, at rest beneath the flowers. Again the discourse of the hermit occurred to my mind, while the deep solitude which prevailed around rendered me still more susceptible of reflection upon the true sense and meaning of his words. I confessed to myself that hitherto I had only been seeking after pleasure, that amid its scenes alone I had found enjoyment, and that my senses had been most attracted and enchained by the sounds of merriment and joy. I felt how I had ever preferred the society of such as added to my pleasure and amusement by their wit and gaiety, to those of a more serious and sedate temperament ; but now I saw that I ought to follow a new course of life.

Occupied with these thoughts, I rose from my seat, intending to pass through the flower-covered graves, and then

return home. Behind the church I beheld a small chapel, which I found open, and but feebly illumined by a lamp. I stepped forward through the porch ; but I must confess I was seized with a certain feeling of terror, which prevented me from advancing. There appeared to reign a silence so mysterious and gloomy in the house of prayer, and there proceeded from within such a cold, shuddering air, as if issuing from a vault, that my farther entrance was completely stopped. I was on the point of retiring, when I observed, by the dim light of the lamp, a female figure kneeling at the foot of the altar, piously engaged in prayer. She seemed to be interrupted by my entrance ; and, accordingly, finishing her devotions, she slowly arose, and passed by me in silence. The darkness hindered my distinguishing her features, but, by her gait and deportment, I could easily perceive that she was young. I followed her at a distance, till she stopped and remained standing before a grave bestrewed with flowers, where she dropped slowly upon her knees and prayed : she then arose and sprinkled the flowers with water out of a basin that was near her. Meanwhile I had approached closer, and, deeply affected by this simple and pious act of devotion, inquired of her softly who it was that lay buried under this hallowed mound of earth.

“ My mother ! ” she gently replied, weeping ; and, concealing her face with her folded hands, she pursued her way across the cemetery towards the town.

I dared not follow ; I felt that it must be far better for her to be left undisturbed, and allowed, without interruption, to indulge her sad and pious feelings. Had she wished to have spoken to me, she would have remained, and would have prolonged the conversation, for my question sufficiently indicated the inclination I felt to learn more about her. Of what use, then, to me, said I, is the strict rule of the hermit ? I would fain have comforted her, and the interest I might have shewn would most assuredly have assuaged her grief ; but she had

defeated my charitable purpose. Yet, to pursue her, detain her, obtrude myself upon her, I could not; still I felt how rightly and reasonably the venerable man had spoken, for as long as man felt he had failed in his duty, he never could be happy — and I was, in truth, melancholy and discontented with myself, though I must confess that the feelings excited by this adventure were not merely of a benevolent kind.

Although it was dark, this had not hindered my remarking, from the outlines of her figure, her dress, and motion, so much nobleness, so much elegance and grace, that I could fain have wished to have exchanged a few more words with her; though still the brief reply I had received from her was sufficient to convince me that nought but filial love, piety, and innocence, could dwell within that bosom. “My mother!” These two words still seemed to sound within the deepest recesses of my heart; by the melody and the sweet accent of that voice alone, amidst thousands, and after the lapse of years, I should have known her again. It would have been easy for me to have pursued her steps, to have learned where she lived, and informed myself further respecting her situation; but the town of Schwytz is so small, that had I been perceived following her by a single person, the next day it would have been published all over the place. I therefore kept the secret securely locked in my own breast, and was sanguine in my hopes of again meeting the unknown to-morrow evening on the same spot. I had purposed quitting Schwytz the ensuing morning, and continuing my route to Zug; but a feeling far more powerful than curiosity prompted me to stay, and thus enchained, I found myself drawn towards the spot among the graves, where, at evening, I hoped again to meet the fair stranger.

## CHAPTER II.



HE day appeared to me inexpressibly tedious. I surveyed all that presents itself to the curiosity of the traveller: the arsenal, the council-house, the hospital, the school, the Capuchin convent, and the cabinet of medals belonging to the Chevalier Hedlinger. I attentively observed all the young females whom I met, but could not find any amongst them who at all resembled her I sought. Thus passed the day.

Towards evening I bent my steps towards Siti, and from thence onwards to the wood of the hermitage. I arrived at the chapel. My old acquaintance the hermit was not there; but, seated on the steps, I beheld—my interesting unknown.

“May I ask what you are doing here?” I inquired, in a friendly tone; to which she modestly replied, “she was waiting for the hermit.”

Yes, it was her indeed: the two words which she had pronounced the evening before seemed again to thrill through my soul at the sound of her voice. I had seen the most celebrated picture-galleries of Europe; I had admired the Madonnas of Raphael and Guido; but amongst the whole of these collections I thought my eyes had never beheld a head so beautiful as that which now presented itself to my gaze. That regular oval form; the mild lustre which shone so sweetly in her soft sloe-black eyes, half hid by their long lashes; that pure innocence of soul which beamed from them; that smile upon her rosy cheeks; those ruby lips;—never could the hand of painter produce or portray greater charms. I was motionless with surprise,

and gazed upon the fair girl with silent wonder and admiration.

She was seated at the foot of the steps leading to the chapel, employed in culling the flowers from some herbs in her lap, and placing them in a basket at her feet. I leant down beside the basket, under the pretence of examining the flowers, and awaiting the arrival of the hermit.

I had once seen, in the collection of Messrs. Boisserée in Heidelberg, a German altar-piece, where the principal figure was a Madonna, whose beautiful countenance made an indelible impression upon me. The painting was upon a ground of gold; and in the celestial countenance of the holy Virgin there was mingled so much of earthly beauty, as made it difficult to decide whether it belonged to this world or to heaven. It seemed to me as if the sweetly animated countenance beside me had served as a model for the painter, so much did the Madonna resemble her; and, as if to complete the illusion, the golden ground of the painting seemed now represented by the horizon behind the Rigi, which, gilded by the setting sun, appeared like a burning altar of the Most High.

The maiden must indeed have imagined I had lost all power of speech, for since my first question, and my assurance of having also to wait for the hermit, not a sound had escaped my lips.

At length I awoke from my trance, and inquired how long it was since her mother was laid under the flowers which she yesterday watered.

"It was one year yesterday," she softly and seriously replied, as her bosom heaved a sigh; her eyes, filled with tears, seemed to rest upon the ocean of fire in the west, as if to express, that, with her mother, the sun which had illumined her life had descended into the darkness and obscurity of night, like the sun of creation now vanishing from our view.

"Have you no father left?" I asked, deeply affected

by this expressive and silent look of sorrow and melancholy.

She shook her head, bent it still lower upon her work, and after a pause answered, "My father died, sir, when I was a child."

"And have you no relations, no friends?"

"Yes, in Schönewerth, in the canton of Soleure. The charitable foundation of St. Clara-Werra there may perhaps not be unknown to you; there I have an uncle. I wrote to him lately, and to-day I have received his answer. It is for the purpose of confiding it to the hermit, and receiving his advice, that I am here; and he is not yet come."

"What says your uncle?"

"He himself is in trouble," she replied; "he has many children, and little wherewith to support them." Sighing again, she held her hand before her eyes, as if beholding before her some yawning precipice that turned her giddy.

"What will you do, then?" I inquired anxiously.

"I know not," she said with emotion, whilst she struggled to restrain her falling tears; "the good hermit would have told me, but he is not here."

"He would have told you," I replied, "that you should pray to God, and put your trust in Him."

"Ah, dear sir, that is what I daily do, and I trust that He will grant my prayer. Hitherto I have lived upon what was left me by my mother, but that was little, for she was poor. Now that is gone, and I am left destitute. I have no one who can assist me; but God will not leave me to perish miserably. I must leave this place, though I know not whither to turn my steps in the wide world."

"And what are you able to do?" I inquired, as I looked at her delicate hand, the whiteness of which could scarce be matched by any courtly dame.

"I know not myself what I can do," she replied, smiling abashed, and looking downwards half ashamed. "It is but very little. Others, however, gain their living who



know not much more; and should I only once leave this place, no doubt I may find a chance of procuring some situation where I may employ myself usefully. I have nothing but the ashes of my dearly-beloved mother to attach me to this place. Two young girls of Schwytz left this town some time since for Vienna and Berlin, and are well situated and happy there; why may I not also meet with the same good fortune?"

I gazed upon the lovely girl with silent wonder; her infantine simplicity formed a singular contrast with the firmness of character she displayed in her determination of venturing into the wide world. During our conversation she had not once ventured to turn her eyes towards me. She continued to gaze upon the crimson sky of evening beneath us, and appeared totally unconscious of, and unembarrassed at, her situation, thus in confidential conversation with a stranger in the dusk of evening, and in the middle of a lonely forest; neither did she seem to entertain the slightest curiosity to know who I was.

She now, however, rose; and shaking from her lap the stems which she had picked off the herbs, took the basket containing the flowers,—for the purpose, as she said, of placing it at the door of the hermit's cell.

I refrained from following her, though at the risk of not seeing her again; for another and a shorter path, leading from the hermitage to Schwytz, rendered it unnecessary for her to return by the more circuitous route leading to the chapel. She, however, shook out the flowers upon the bench at the hermit's door, and returned again towards the chapel. Transported with joy, I rose from my seat and advanced a few steps to meet her. During the time of her absence I had taken from my purse three pieces of gold, which I now, secretly and unobserved, whilst walking by her side, dropped into her basket.

We wandered back towards Siti; twice had I been upon the point of offering her my arm, but could not summon up courage to do so, fearing from her appearance she might

decline my offer, and then I should have felt ashamed of myself. To such as have visited Switzerland, and have become acquainted with the customs and manners of its inhabitants in the various cantons, and have also heard the energetic though simple language of the mountaineers in those parts, my familiar style of addressing her will not appear surprising.\*

When we had gained the middle of the alley of trees leading from Siti to Schwytz, she was on the point of quitting the high road, and directing her course straight towards the town, apparently for the purpose of avoiding to enter the place at the same time with myself. She then bade me adieu, and presented me her snow-white hand.

"Tell me, then, sweet maiden, shall I see you again to-morrow?"

And as I inquired, I gazed on her black eyes, as if to read in the bottom of her soul, whether or not she shared with me in any slight degree that feeling by which I myself was penetrated.

"With all my heart, dear sir, if it will give you pleasure," she replied, in a tone and manner so natural, so artless, and so mild, as could never have been expressed even by the most refined coquette; indeed, all the arts of coquetry itself could never have produced the effect of these pure and simple words. "You talk so pleasantly," she continued, "that I could listen to you for ever. It is already very late, and still I know not how the time has passed away; I know you not, and yet in the whole place there is not one I like to speak with as I do with you."

"Where, and when, then, shall I see you again?" I asked.

\* In order to explain this passage more clearly, it is necessary to add, for the information of such readers as may not be acquainted with the German language, that the Germans have three modes of addressing the second person singular,—one of which is *du*, or 'thou;' the style here employed in addressing Liesli,—which is only used to such as are relatives, to children, confidential friends, or to menials. The different character of the English and German languages in this respect has not allowed us to retain this distinction in the translation.—*Tr.*

"Alas!" she replied, "I know not. The people here," she continued, confidentially, "are so very curious: surely any one might have listened to our conversation of this evening; and yet should any person know or find out that we have been here alone, what a stir it would create! If you wish and think half so well or so kindly of me as I do of you, you will not, I am sure, desire that evil should be said or thought of me; and this I never could escape were I found alone with you."

"The day after to-morrow," I said, "I must leave this part of the country; and then I shall never more see you! Indeed, I ought to have set out this very morning, but the hope of finding you once more has kept me back: that hope has led me all the day around your neighbourhood, it has guided me on the way to the hermitage, and there, busy in preparing the herbs on the step of the chapel, I happily again found you. Surely those plants must contain some hidden charm wherewith to cure a mind diseased? Ah! perhaps they may afford relief to me as well; for the thought of parting with you, and that for ever, oppresses my heart."

With any city-dame this would have appeared a mere effusion of gallantry, an ordinary complimentary expression, of little import; but the lovely simple Swiss girl took my words in that true sense and honourable meaning with which they had been uttered.

"How say you, dear sir! you have sought for *me*—you have remained here on *my* account?" she exclaimed, while a smile of satisfaction played upon her ruby lips.

I then at once replied, by ingenuously informing her of the deep impression the scene on the evening before, at the grave of her departed mother, had made upon my feelings—of the desire and interest that had been excited in me to know more about her situation and circumstances,—and I expressed the happiness I felt at having thus far attained this object. I then concluded by entreating her, in the most urgent manner, to let me once more, the fol-

lowing day, see and speak with her, if it were only to bid her adieu.

The idea of separating is ever attended with a charm which works upon the feelings of the heart in a peculiarly forcible manner. How often does it happen, that in parties where a certain coldness and stiffness of character may have prevailed the whole evening, when at length the moment of separation arrives, these feelings yield to others of a more free and cordial nature. But the pain of parting affects woman's heart still deeper than man's; she remains behind, a prey to all those acute feelings in which a faithful and tender bosom cannot refrain from indulging. It was, therefore, with a knowledge of this circumstance, and an inward conviction of its truth, that I accordingly said I could only stay until to-morrow at the latest; for when she saw that only one day remained between us and our parting, I felt assured she could not deny me the meeting; and in this, as it proved, I had judged rightly.

"And do you, then, really leave the day after to-morrow?" she asked, in a tremulous voice. "Ah yes! I feel indeed that *once more* in this life I must see you! Well, then, to-morrow I will meet you; but it must be far away from this neighbourhood, and at a very early hour too, when all are asleep. Where, then, shall we fix the place of meeting? Would you like to ascend the Engelstock, or mount Ruffi, or would you rather climb the peak of Rigi? There I will point out to you the chalky Alps and the Nagelflue mountains: ay, and believe me, you shall there behold objects which will cause you to remember our canton all your life."

"Then let us ascend the Rigi," I exclaimed joyfully; and the thought of admiring, beside this maiden, with rapturous feelings of awe and wonder, God's magnificent creation, from the pinnacle of the gigantic Rigi, excited sensations of the most pleasing nature.

"Good," said she; "and, if you have courage, I will lead you up over the ladder to the small chapel, dedicated

to our Queen of the Snow.\* There you will have to learn to climb and scramble; but for that, however, you will be amply rewarded afterwards. You will from thence behold at once no fewer than fourteen lakes—you will see into the very heart of Swabia; and, amidst the whole, will rise to your view mount Jura, the Horns of St. Gothard, and the ancient town of Zurich, together with fourteen cantons, innumerable cities, towns, and villages; and, high above the clouds, the eternal snows and glaciers of the glorious and stately Jungfrau,—all will present themselves to your admiring gaze!—Good night, dear sir," said Liesli (for that she now told me was her name), "the night wears on apace, and we must set out very early to-morrow, else, should the sun have got the start of us, we may have reason soon to complain both of fatigue and heat when climbing up the mountain."

She then hastily pointed out to my view the spot where we were to meet the following morning early, and glided away as swift as an arrow from a bow.

I remained for a long time afterwards transfixed, as it were, to the spot, whilst my eye, pursuing her onwards as she rapidly sped on her way, could distinguish her white aerial form gliding through the dark avenues of the trees to a great distance, till at last all traces of her vanished from my view.

\* Founded in 1689 by Zay of Arth, and much visited by pilgrims.



## CHAPTER III.

**P**RESENTLY the old hermit came up to me. "Whence come you, my son?" he inquired, in a tone indicating dissatisfaction. "Ah! is it you, venerable father," I exclaimed, recollecting myself; "I hardly knew you. It is so dark and gloomy amidst these trees, that one can scarcely distinguish the nearest object. I have just come from your hermitage, where I wished to pay you a visit."

"I have been absent all the day," he answered; "was any one, besides you, inquiring there for me?"

"No one," I replied; for, wishing to conceal my meeting with Liesli, I resorted to a falsehood.

"There, I have brought with me something for you," said the old man, slipping into my hand a small folded paper; "do not, however, open it till your return home, as it is of value, and here you might lose it; I shall doubtless see you to-morrow morning?"

"Most certainly," I replied; in order that he might await my coming at the hermitage, instead of wandering out, and thus in the end meet me and Liesli together. This was my cunning plan for overreaching the old man. As to the rest, of what great value could that be which the poor hermit had put into my hand—he for whom Liesli but a few hours before had gathered herbs, that he might exchange them for provisions?

"May your sleep be sweet and tranquil," added he, seriously; "and take care that you fall not into the snares of temptation, and that the spirit of evil have no power over you. The world is full of suspicion; and there are many who depend upon the happiness which the next day

may bring them, and yet, being often caught in their own snare, they fancy all the while it has been laid for them by others. Good night, stranger."

With these remarkable words he left me, and proceeded on his way to the hermitage. I, however, hastened after the beloved shadow of Liesli; but, of course, no further traces of her were to be perceived. No doubt she had long retired to rest, and was enjoying the sweet repose of innocence, when I reached the inn, where, excited by my impatient curiosity, I ordered a candle, and immediately began to examine the contents of the present which I had received from the hands of the poor hermit.

What was my surprise when I beheld the three pieces of gold which I had previously dropped into Liesli's basket! I was completely petrified!

Was, then, the hermit a wizard? Was Liesli merely a being presented to my imagination by some deceitful, malignant spirit? I shuddered as I thought that the old emaciated form of the anchorite, and the beautiful Liesli blooming in all her charms, might be one and the same! How came he in possession of the money? Now it was that I called to mind his words at parting. What could he mean by saying, "those who depend upon the happiness of the next day"—what should these words portend? What could the old man have to do with the charming girl? What had the hermit of Siti to do among the flower-strewed graves at the foot of the Mythen? Or had the young maiden really acted the character of an anchorite? Did she conceal her youthful beauty beneath the coarse garb of a hermit? But no, no; that was impossible: the recluse was above a head taller than Liesli; his eyes were sunk and hollow; his voice was tremulous, his skin withered: there was no mask—no illusion there!

I lay down to rest, but could not sleep. The Mythen, which from my bed I could plainly perceive towering to the black heavens above, seemed to totter and tremble: I

could not close my eyes; for at each moment I imagined I beheld it descending to bury me in its ruins, without either flowers or wreath to decorate my grave. At length, towards morning, I fell asleep; but alas, over-fatigued, I exceeded the appointed hour of the meeting.

Hastily rising and dressing myself, I flew to the spot, where I arrived, breathless, fifty-five minutes beyond the time fixed. The Rigi was there, but no Liesli.

I waited at the place, reproaching myself severely, forming a thousand suppositions and doubts. I calculated upon a thousand difficulties and hindrances, and that, too, during a full and anxious hour: the ancient Rigi, however, still remained stationary before my sight; but the form of Liesli appeared not.

"This," said I to myself, "is the work of the hermit—he alone is the author of this painful disappointment," as I recalled his words to my recollection. Yesterday I fancied to myself the happiness I should experience this morning. But now I felt convinced that the hermit had laid the net in which I was caught—a net of the most unaccountable doubt and mystery. Well, indeed, might he pronounce his prophecy; for all this was, no doubt, of his contrivance. He it was, and he alone, who had prepared for me this harrowing disappointment, and thus so suddenly and so completely blasted all the pleasure I had anticipated in ascending the Rigi with Liesli. The small ladder which I was to have ascended with her had appeared to my fancy as Jacob's ladder of angels. In imagination I had climbed with her to the very heavens; and having arrived at that eternal sojourn, had drawn the ladder up after us, and contemplated from the abode of angels the busy scene of tumult and agitation below, utterly regardless of all that was passing there.

But now, alas, I found myself standing awake before Mount Rigi; on the summit of the mountain, where the rising sun saluted with his rays the great cross, and where, elevated nearer to heaven, in the presence of God, and in




the face of free Switzerland, her native soil, I had hoped to meet my dear Liesli. I intended here to have besought her to be mine, to share with me all my joys and sorrows; and now, alas, the moment which was to have crowned my happiness, of which I would have summoned all nature to be a witness, was flown away, perhaps for ever!

I felt myself overwhelmed with the bitterness of my disappointed feelings. Where was I to seek Liesli? where should I find her? Had she been here at all? or had she perhaps concluded from my delay that I would not come? I put a thousand questions to myself, and became only the more and more chagrined and vexed both with myself, with Liesli, and the anchorite.



## CHAPTER IV.

T length I resolved that the hermit, above all, should explain to me how he had yesterday obtained possession of the three gold pieces, though it could naturally be from no other person but Liesli herself. I then wished to interrogate him further respecting the young girl—to learn in what connexion he stood towards her; and then, should I discover that he had any influence over her, I would candidly avow my views and intentions.

I hurried back to Schwytz, and from thence by Siti to the hermitage. The recluse, however, was not there. I awaited his return at the door of his cell the whole of the day, without taking any nourishment, even until late at night.

But all in vain! and completely exhausted and disappointed, I returned home. During the whole of that day I had flattered myself with the hope, at each rustling of the leaves, of beholding the light form of Liesli issue forth; but a thousand times was I deceived.

Whoever has felt the torment of waiting for some much-longed-for object, can form an idea how long and tedious this agonising day appeared to me.

Late at night I repaired again to the churchyard. I entered the chapel where I had beheld Liesli for the first time, and then I visited the grave of her departed mother; but the object of my search was no where to be met with. The night was beautiful and serene; the evening dew refreshed the flowers with which the graves were bestrewed, and perfumed the air with the most delicious odours; the atmosphere was unagitated by a single zephyr; the deepest

silence reigned all around ; whilst quick successive flashes darted across the firmament, and illumined at intervals the heavens above. Melancholy and depressed, I retraced my steps back to the inn.

The following day I recommenced the same fruitless and unavailing search. "To-morrow," I thought, "I will once more proceed to the desolate hermitage ; and should it then be still deserted, nothing shall deter me from seeking her myself: the place is small, and surely I shall find some one from whom I may gain some intelligence respecting her." I again passed the whole of the day at the hermit's door ; but he was, and remained, invisible !

I now considered myself as free from all that restraint and obligation which, though I knew not why, I imagined I owed to the hermit. To me he had, till this moment, appeared as possessing great power and influence over Liesli's actions. She had come to receive his advice ; she had given him my three pieces of gold for the purpose of returning them to me : some connexion, therefore, must exist between them. If I had succeeded in gaining the hermit over to my side, then was Liesli mine. Some such presentiment had entered my mind ; and it was this hope, and this alone, which had made me wait three successive days. Whether the hermit had concealed himself from me, or whether he were really absent, what was that now to me ? I had renounced all further intercourse—I had done with him. One short moment more in the churchyard, and should I again be disappointed in finding Liesli there, I resolved to inquire her residence at my landlady's. My patience was now, indeed, completely exhausted : I was determined to put my purpose into immediate execution, and thus finally attain the object of my wishes. Liesli was not there ! How changeable, how versatile, a being is man ! I felt inwardly happy at not finding her ! Supported and encouraged by three successive failures of my fond hopes, I began to persuade myself that I had a right—that I was justified, nay bound, to seek her.

The hour I had proposed passing at the chapel—the last hour—had expired! I arose from the low wall where I had been seated, and was on the point of retiring, when among the graves, even in the midst of the darkness of night, I could distinguish a dark figure advancing towards me. My blood ran cold through my veins; for suddenly before me stood, concealed in his cowl, the hermit!

“You were, I find, at my dwelling?” he inquired, in a tone of voice which sounded as if issuing from the tombs around us.

“Yes, venerable father,” I replied, gazing at the mysterious being before me with wonder and astonishment. How could he have learned that I was inquiring for him? Why did he come now, just at the moment when I was on the point of seeking Liesli? Whence could he come? It seemed as if some secret subterraneous passage communicated between the hermitage and the churchyard. “I have awaited your coming these three days,” I continued, “but in vain.”

“I know it,” he replied, in a milder tone; “a herdsman perceived you, and informed me of it. You wish for further information respecting the young female whom you met on the steps of the chapel. What does the orphan concern you?—but answer me not, for I know that the truth does not always proceed from your lips. You seek the maiden; but you may spare yourself that needless trouble—you will not find her. Her mother, in her dying moments, charged me to watch over her welfare and happiness. On the very morning when you imagined you would climb Mount Rigi, Liesli departed. She has gone to her relations, whom I had previously informed of her mother’s death, and from whom, after an interval of twelve months, I received money and instructions to send the orphan to them, provided with the necessary attendance. On the evening when you came to me, and had met with Liesli, I had gone to the town for the purpose of making the proper arrangements for her departure.

When you gave her the three gold pieces, she knew nothing of her intended journey: she only received intelligence of it from me on the following morning before daybreak. Hearing, after leaving you in the alley of trees, the sound of money in her basket, she most naturally concluded that you alone could be the giver, and therefore delivered it to me, in order to return it to you. Let me add, my son, that in the art of *giving*, you have as yet made but very little progress; your present has humiliated and shamed more than it has pleased or gratified the maiden."

"What, Liesli gone?" I exclaimed. "Tell me, venerable father, whither is she gone? If you are indeed her friend, then tell me; for it concerns her own happiness. My intentions are good and honourable; for my only wish is to offer her my heart and hand, with all my fortune."

"*You*," said the hermit, half ironically, "*you*, who have only known her a very few hours, would offer her your whole life? How do you know whether this virtuous girl, who is so rich in all the gifts of person and intellect, holds you worthy of her love? Do you, then, think that with your despicable money every thing may be procured?"

"You do not seem to wish me well, venerable father."

"I can never wish them well who seek to deceive me with falsehoods. On that evening, when I met you amidst the trees, I asked you whether any others had been inquiring for me at the hermitage during my absence. 'No one!' you replied; and yet, but five minutes before, my upright, virtuous Liesli, who never stained her lips with a falsehood, had told me that she herself had been with you the whole of the evening! I asked you if you would come to me the following morning? 'Yes, with pleasure,' you replied, although you had already agreed with Liesli, as she informed me, to ascend Mount Rigi with her that same morning. What had I done to merit such deception from you? Whoever lies will also steal.

Should I not act very foolishly, were I to tell the thief where I had placed the treasure confided to my care?"

Alas! my sin had been detected, and had brought its punishment. Those two falsehoods had forfeited the good opinion of the venerable hermit. My greatest wish, at that moment, was to have been able to reply with feelings of conscious innocence and indignation to the hermit; but this was impossible, for I felt too well how justly and truly he had spoken.

"Well," I said at length, completely ashamed and disconcerted, "you are indeed a severe minister of truth, and for this I shall ever highly honour and revere you; but may I ask you to tell me, without reserve, how Liesli expressed herself about me; for to me, filled as my heart is with such a pure love for her, it cannot be indifferent to learn whether I may hope and depend upon a reciprocal attachment?"

"You," returned he, after some hesitation, "are the first acquaintance she has formed as yet. To this circumstance alone you must attribute a confidence and friendship towards you more perhaps than was proper for her to shew."

I took advantage of this concession of the hermit to conclude that Liesli was not wholly indifferent to me.

"Once more, then," I inquired, somewhat bolder, "can you not inform me of Liesli's present abode?"

"No!" he answered, in an abrupt and decisive tone.

"I beseech you to consider this well, holy father; you will have to answer for this denial at some future period, both to the maiden and also to your own conscience."

"You hold yourself at a very high price," he replied, "and doubtless you imagine that it will be impossible for Liesli to exist without you or your dollars. Liesli may perhaps, at this very moment, be far richer than yourself. However, you are still young," he added, after a pause, and in a milder tone; "you are no doubt smitten by Liesli's beauty, and are perhaps thus led to a determi-

nation which at a later period you may have cause to repent. Should you at the expiration of a year still think of her as at this moment, then come again, and we will speak together further upon the subject; but remember, I must be dealt *truly* with. No falsehood can prosper in the end."

I remained for some time ruminating whether or not it might be possible to persuade the old man into a more reasonable stipulation, when he drew from beneath the folds of his gown an Alpine rose, most carefully secured. This he now presented to me, and said, with a smile, "You have just now doubted the uprightness of my conscience; behold, Liesli sends you this as a token of remembrance; she plucked it on the way before we separated; and I was obliged to promise her that I would faithfully deliver it into your hands. Now, do you doubt my honour?"

"No, holy father!" I exclaimed; "and, in order that you yourself may not doubt *my* honour, I will not even wish to know where Liesli is; but after the twelve months are expired, I will come and demand her from your hands. I sincerely repent of my deceitful dealing with you. Hereafter, you will, I trust, have no reason to complain of my conduct."

"That, my son, time will shew," replied the hermit, calmly; and, bidding me farewell, requested me not to come again to him, as he should be absent for a considerable time.

"Father!" I exclaimed, with emotion, "what if we *never* see each other again! Twelve months is a long time; you are old, and stricken in years; God may call you to himself, and then what shall I do?"

"Apply to the proper civil authority in this town, where my papers will be found after my death; they will furnish you with more particular information."

He now presented me his hand with a manner and air as mild and kind as it at first had been harsh and

unfriendly. It appeared as if he had some presentiment that we should never meet again, and which, alas! proved but too well founded.

"God be with you," said he, mildly; "and may He let the light of His countenance shine upon you, and be favourable to your wishes of deserving the love of the virtuous Liesli.—Amen!"

With these words he left me, proceeding by the road across the graves, till I saw him—no more. He was now gone—Liesli was gone—I knew not even who she was, and I had one whole year yet to wait.





## CHAPTER V.



**A**S Liesli was now away, my inquiries could not affect her reputation ; and I hastened back to my inn with the most anxious curiosity. I intended first of all to question my landlady — a very talkative woman — about the hermit, and then I imagined the conversation would naturally turn upon Liesli.

The anchorite, I found, stood very high in her estimation, and was greatly respected ; his advice was sought by all the afflicted ; he devoted himself to the service of every one, of whatever station, with unwearied zeal and activity ; his course of life was pure and unstained, and his reputation known to all around, both far and near.

I listened attentively to every word, and it was with shame that I confessed to myself, how easily I had yielded to suspicions unfavourable to the character of the hermit, and how much I had wronged him in harbouring a doubt as to his real worth and honesty of principle. To me, indeed, the hermitage had seemed too favourably situated and too well adapted for pursuing, under the mask of sanctity, a very different plan in private. “Strangers or such persons,” continued my landlady, “with whom he felt dissatisfied, he treated in a distant and harsh manner ; but such as he knew and was satisfied with, whatever their condition, he addressed in a more confidential and friendly tone.”

This reminded me how reserved his manner had been at the commencement of our conversation, and how brief were his replies ; and I felt satisfied and pleased to think that he had afterwards shewn me more confidence and kindness. I could not help, too, thinking with shame of the

unworthy way in which I had treated him on that memorable evening.

"Is the young person whom I have sometimes seen in his company a relation of his?" I inquired, describing Liesli's appearance so exactly, that any one who had seen her but once in their life could not have failed to recognise her again in the faithful picture I drew of her.

"Ay, ay," continued the landlady, with a knowing smile; "there you would no doubt like to take the hermit's place! Don't you think she is a charming girl? Here in Schwytz we have many pretty girls, it is true, but not one half so beautiful. Doubtless you mean Liesli, with the large black eyes, and such a sweet, amiable countenance?"

"Yes," I replied, pleased at being able to converse with some one on the topic; "who is she, pray?"

"That is a question, sir, nobody here can answer. On the first of October, so far as I can remember, during the unhappy period of the war in 1799, when Suwarrow and Mortier, with Soult and Massena, laid waste the whole country with their armies, a most furious and bloody skirmish took place in the valley of Muotta. About a mile from hence is situated, as you no doubt know, the bridge of Ibach; the Russians had advanced as far as this bridge, where, however, they were surprised by General Lecourbe, who, having landed at Brunnen, fell upon their rear, and put them all to rout. It was shortly after the termination of this combat that they brought hither a young and beautiful woman, whose husband, an officer of high rank, had been left dead on the field of battle. This, it appears, had so much affected her, as to drive her, in the first agony of the moment, to attempt her life. Whether he had been in the French, Russian, or Austrian service, was never ascertained; for the mere mention of her husband, to whom no doubt she had been most tenderly attached, had the most alarming effect upon her feelings. Many well-disposed people here, pitying her situation, endeavoured to soothe her by every possible attention. She obtained her

livelihood by giving instruction in the French and Italian languages, as well as in music; though this was barely sufficient to keep her from want. It was reported that she came from Solothurn, though her friends had dropped all further intercourse with her—which neglect she had probably brought upon herself by marrying an officer without their consent. About six months afterwards she gave birth to that same Liesli, whom it appears you have already seen. Her mother devoted all her time to her education, and to instilling into her mind pious and virtuous principles; indeed, her child was so beloved by every one in the place, that had she even been related to any one of our own families here, she could not have been dearer to us. Now, since her mother is dead, she has been under the protection of the hermit, who has provided for her; and may God bless the orphan, and grant her all her life that happiness she so much deserves!"

Involuntarily I squeezed the hand of the landlady, with a feeling of gratitude for the pious prayer she had just uttered for Liesli, and I felt overjoyed at hearing so much good proceed from an impartial mouth respecting her, though I was still ignorant of what I so particularly wished to be informed. When alone in my apartment, I tormented myself in forming every possible conjecture on her present abode and fate. The hermit, then, had provided for her merely from duty and friendship, and from motives purely disinterested. I certainly considered myself capable of doing any thing for such an angel; but I never could believe that another would do the same, and I felt jealous at the thought that Liesli had confided her happiness to his hands, and not to mine. All my good feelings towards the old hermit vanished: my blood rushed to my cheeks; I resolved to set out immediately for the hermitage, and endeavour, by persuasion or force, to wrest the secret from him. "Fool that I was," I exclaimed; "how have I allowed myself to be duped and misled! How must he laugh at my simplicity and inexperience! Who knows

what are his views or intentions with respect to Liesli? Age does not always withstand folly: so long as no one had stood in his way, he had left the young girl to herself; but now that the unsuspecting creature has perhaps in her simplicity betrayed to him her partiality for me, he tears her from my arms, confines her in some subterraneous corner of his hermitage, and retains her there a prisoner until I may have turned my back upon the frontiers of the canton, which, having once reached, I may then travel as far as I like, seek as long as I please, and torment myself as much as I choose—to him it will be quite immaterial; he will only laugh at me in his sleeve.”

With the dawn of day, I stood before the door of the hermitage; I knocked, pushed, and called—but in vain; no answer was returned, not a sound was heard. At length a herdsman's boy, attracted by the noise I made, descended from the mountain above, and informed me that the hermit was gone upon a long journey, and, as he had told all his acquaintances in the neighbourhood, would not return for some months.

Thus, then, Liesli was indeed lost to me. There were no means, no hopes of regaining her. Switzerland had now no longer any charms for me: I had climbed enough amongst her mountains and glaciers; I was as weary of sailing along her beautiful lakes as of tasting her wines and cheese. To her beggars I had given alms, and her innkeepers had enriched themselves at my expense; her maidens—but not one word of the women of Switzerland; each time when the discourse fell upon them, and I was questioned as to my opinion of them, and how I liked them—my heart was cut in twain.

The thought, however, of once more returning to Switzerland, after the expiration of the year, sustained my sinking spirits. I already enjoyed in imagination the pleasure I should experience on my visit to the hermit—while, should he attempt to escape me by the least evasion,

when summoned to fulfil his promise, I determined he certainly should not escape my hands unpunished.

In the mean time, after my return home to my friends, I had to endure the torment of all their sneers and scoffs. "Well to be sure," said they scornfully behind my back; "now that he has seen the world a little, there is nothing here which is good enough for the gentleman. Whenever we, who contentedly remain at home, bless our stars to think that we have such a happy land to live and enjoy ourselves in, and which surely God has not in his goodness rendered quite a desert, there sits Master Hermann, turning up his nose in contempt, as if our high hills in front of the windmill-gate were in his opinion not worth looking at! Well, they are certainly not glaciers; but, pray, do potatoes grow upon his favourite ice-tipped hills, as they do here round the windmill? Why, the man will at last become a glacier himself—he is so cold and frosty in his manner!"

I let the good people talk on, and whenever anxious to procure myself a real reviving feeling of joy, I used to retire, bending my steps towards the top of the highest of their hills, and there turned myself towards the distant land where I had before sojourned, and where my affections were centred.



## CHAPTER VI.



THREE months were still wanting to complete the appointed time—the year—at the end of which I was to renew my inquiries at the hermitage; when, just at this period, an obstacle presented itself, so as to render it doubtful whether or not I should attain the object of my wishes. This unwelcome hindrance which waylaid me so unexpectedly was nothing more or less than a skin of parchment, covered and decorated with chancery scrawls and calligraphic figures, bearing my nomination from government to an office at once honourable and lucrative. My friends congratulated, whilst they at the same time envied me; though I would most willingly have parted with place, and every honour and title it might bring with it, for a trifle, ay, even gratis; for now no more must I think of a journey to Switzerland! What would the prince, what would my superiors in office say to my requesting leave of absence for three months, just after my appointment? Still, however, I did not altogether renounce the hope of obtaining it: love surmounts every obstacle. I resolved to inform the minister candidly that I intended to marry, and request permission to go and fetch my bride home from her native country.

But what if I did not succeed in finding Liesli? And should I return home without a wife, would not the minister most naturally conclude I had received a refusal? Might not this only hold me up to scorn? Ought I to explain to a man of such high importance, buried amidst his diplomatic duties, the tale of my love to Liesli, and my adventures with her and the hermit? Yet, in spite of

this reasoning, I had just determined on putting my plan into execution, when I received quite unexpectedly the most decisive orders to proceed immediately with despatches from my court to that of St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg and Switzerland! separated from each other by a distance of four hundred leagues! Were I to go to Russia, then would Liesli be for ever lost to me; the hermit would then regard all the professions which I had made as the mere childish effusions of a romantic brain, and accordingly conclude from my absence that I had really forgotten her. Besides, in this interval more than twenty offers may be made to her, and her heart be continually besieged by suitors. Could I blame her for giving her hand to another?

If, on the other side, I went to Switzerland, I must previously demand my dismissal, and thus renounce all the prospects which presented themselves before me; for I could not possibly furnish any pretext whatever sufficiently strong to excuse my declining to execute the mission confided to my charge; besides, this appointment was so distinguished and honourable, and was attended with the certain prospect of such rapid and sure advancement, that it would have been acting completely contrary to every principle of honour and advantage had I endeavoured to avoid undertaking the journey.

Still, in order not to sacrifice all prospect of my happiness in life, by the ultimate possession of Liesli's hand, I devised, in the anxiety of my feelings, a desperate remedy. I wrote to my good landlady in Schwytz, and made her my confidant. I informed her of all that had passed between Liesli, the hermit, and myself; entreating her to deliver to the former the letter which I enclosed; or should she not be acquainted with her abode, to consign it to the care of the hermit.

In the letter I enclosed, I offered to Liesli, in a brief but affectionate manner, my hand and heart.

I sealed the letter; and committing it to the post-

office, congratulated myself upon my dexterity in thus managing my affairs; and in some measure tranquillised in mind, I set out for St. Petersburg.

I determined within myself not to bestow my regards upon any female whatever; no, not in the whole of Russia's colossal empire, with all the numerous provinces she held in sway, should a lover be found so true and faithful as myself. I inwardly vowed that my heart should return with me untouched; and yet—I gave it away there!

On the celebration of the nuptials of the Grand Duke Nicholas Pawlowitsch with the Princess Alexandrina Fedorowna, I attended the whole of the ceremony, commencing with the marriage, to the ball in the saloon of St. George. Before the end of the ball, the emperor, accompanied by the empress, repaired to the palace of the newly married couple; they were followed by the young and amiable pair, the empress mother, and the whole court in grand gala.

It was, indeed, one of the most brilliant sights I had ever seen in the whole of my life. The illuminated streets swarmed with the crowding population; the throng of gazers—many of whom, from a true hearty feeling, might have perhaps drank to the health of the young couple a glass too much—was truly indescribable.

At the moment when the court was passing, the cries, the exclamations, and the hurrahs of the pressing crowd had reached their greatest height. The command of the police-officers to keep order and make room only added to and finally completed the confusion and distress.

All was squeezing, screaming, and pressing against each other: for myself, through the pressure of the crowd, I had received into my arms a stout coarse market-woman—an inconvenience immediately followed by that of the weight of a fat heavy Finlander upon my poor toes, whilst a droschki-driver thrust his elbows into my ribs, a long-legged Polish count lay upon my back, and to end all, a little Samojad chambermaid supported her elbows upon



my loins. Thus pressed and attacked on all sides, I was carried on by the crowd, in spite of all opposition; when suddenly another rush of the multitude threw into my arms a young and beautiful lady, upon casting my eyes at whom, I found it was—Liesli! I uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise, which, however, no sooner escaped me than a second rush separated us again. Maddened and desperate, I threw off the market-woman, turned over the Finlander, kicked down the droschki-driver; and upsetting the whole posse, with the little chambermaid to boot, I most strenuously endeavoured to free myself from their fangs, and to dash forward and regain hold of Liesli; but all in vain. They clung to me like bees; and instead of herself, I succeeded only in gaining—her shawl. I called out her name; but my voice was completely lost amongst the multitude, and the charming apparition had vanished from my sight. My way was, in fact, so completely obstructed by the crowds of Calmucks, Wogulians, Barabintzians, Tunguselians, Tschetschewzelians, &c. &c., that nothing further could be heard or seen of her; and I thanked Heaven that I had been happy enough even to catch the shawl.

A Calmuck standing near me, who had seen how I had effected this seizure, and how much trouble and exertion the attaining of this prize from amidst the crowd had cost me, secretly gave a knowing wink and grinned at me, as if to testify his approbation, and to applaud the address I had shewn. At this moment also, pressing his way through the immense legions of the various semi-barbarous tribes and nations under Russian sway, appeared a supple Frenchman, who gave me to understand pretty intelligibly his inclination to purchase the *rag*, as he termed it, if I would part with it at a moderate price. As I, however, pretended not to hear or understand his debasing offer, the crafty knave mumbled between his teeth, as he left me, about “the police being very near at hand, and that they would soon know how to deal with those very polite

people who spared the ladies the trouble of carrying home their shawls." This hint, however, I did not allow to escape me without profiting by it; and I resolved to make my way home as fast as I could; for what had I further to do here?—Liesli would not certainly return again. I determined upon pursuing her; but where should I find her, amidst this throng of half a million of people, and in the middle of the night too?

I happily succeeded in escaping from the claws of the Frenchman and the police; but nowhere could my eyes in any direction meet the form of Liesli. Fatigued and half dead with exhaustion, I returned home with my prize under my arm.



## CHAPTER VII.



ON the return of my landlord's family, all the members of which had also been present at the grand spectacle, I shewed them the shawl, and related how I had obtained it. The wife and daughters held up their hands in wonder and admiration at the splendour of the pattern and fineness of the texture. In their estimation it was worth at least a thousand ducats, and they congratulated me upon my good fortune. But on hearing this I felt only the more melancholy and alarmed, particularly as they went on praising the real Turkish texture, its softness, and the tasteful arrangement of colours which it displayed; for I now became convinced that the noble and graceful beauty who had been thrown into my arms by the crowd could not have been Liesli; "for how could that poor girl," I asked myself, "who, but a short twelvemonth before, had held her hands before her eyes to avoid the sight of the precipice—which, when contemplating her helpless situation, seemed to yawn before her—how, and by what means, could she have become the owner of such a precious article? How, indeed, could she have arrived at all here?"

Scarcely could I close my eyes the whole of the night. At one moment I wished to persuade myself that it was indeed Liesli whom I had seen; then, again, I would fain have wished it might be a mistake; for, were it really herself, no doubt she had become the wife of some very rich man, or else—but, "no, no!" I exclaimed to myself; "I will not entertain the thought for a moment."

The following morning I made it my first business to

drive to the newspaper-office, for the purpose of inserting an advertisement, and thus making publicly known my having found the shawl, and informing the owner where and in whose hands it was to be met with, upon application. Thus there was no doubt the riddle would be soon solved; for I had determined not to surrender the shawl into any other hands but those of the lady from whose neck I had snatched it; and, indeed, I found the mystery speedily explained, and myself most bitterly disappointed.

The publisher had scarcely cast his eyes upon my advertisement, when, with much pleasure depicted in his countenance, he informed me, that the very moment before my arrival, a servant belonging to the household of a highly distinguished nobleman—Count Barczikoff—had brought him likewise an advertisement for insertion, in which he had promised the finder of the shawl in question two hundred rubles as a reward for his honesty, to which was added a particular description of it. The shawl, upon examination, proved to be the same in every respect; and accordingly, I found, that not my Swiss girl, but a Countess Barczikoff, was the owner of my honourably-acquired treasure! The residence of the count was also most particularly described, near the Casan Church in the Newski-Line; and accordingly I proceeded thither without delay, although with a desponding heart.

From the grandeur of the building, and magnificence of the interior, I immediately perceived that the lady of the house might indeed very well afford to possess a shawl of a thousand ducats value. I looked with the most intense anxiety towards the door through which the owner of my precious booty was to enter, and which opening at length, suddenly introduced to my impatient anxiously-excited gaze the well-known form of—Liesli! She knew and recognised me immediately; the crimson blush of unexpected surprise and delight spread itself over her beauteous countenance, and a stifled cry of joy was the welcome of her heart to me. I forgot St. Petersburg

and Russia altogether. I felt myself transported again to Switzerland—to the churchyard of Schwytz! I thought no more of the Countess Barczikoff. We put a thousand questions to each other in one breath, to which we neither of us waited for a reply; and it was some time before we could succeed in calming ourselves sufficiently to communicate to each other the events of the past year.

The father of my Liesli had been the only son of Count Barczikoff, and had served in the army which marched into Switzerland, where, as already stated, he fell in a severe conflict at the bridge of Ibach. The old count had never sanctioned the marriage of his son with Liesli's mother, who was a poor Swiss girl of Solothurn, and accordingly, on that account, would never acknowledge or even consider her as his daughter-in-law. The hermit, however, who, previously to her mother's death, had received from the dying woman the full particulars of her child's high claims and connexions, announced to the count her death, and succeeded so far in touching his heart, that, enfeebled as he was by age, and convinced of the near approach of his term in this world's life, he no longer viewed the prejudices of birth with the same proud and jealous eye as heretofore, and at length decided on sending for Liesli, acknowledging her as his grand-daughter, and as the only surviving inheritor of his rich and extensive possessions. Thus he endeavoured, by kindness to the child, to make up in some measure for the severity he had formerly shewn towards the mother.

The mysterious hermit, in conformity with his habit, had never mentioned a single word of all this to Liesli; but, on the very morning that Liesli had agreed to ascend Mount Rigi with me, he had, to her great surprise, come at the early hour of two o'clock, and awoke her from sleep, requesting her to follow him. She nevertheless candidly confessed to him at once her previous appointment with me for that morning; but he strictly forbade it, and would not hear of her meeting me.

Here my little countess skipped over the affair of the pieces of gold, which, in conjunction with the untruth I had told the hermit the evening before, served doubtless to displease him; and I myself could find no possible ground for touching upon that piece of worse than folly. He was (she continued) exceedingly angry, and had declared most positively that no meeting of the kind should or could ever take place—she must follow him. He was appointed by her mother as her tutor and guardian; and therefore, thus empowered, he must insist upon her unhesitating obedience. Thus urged, she could not help herself; and she accordingly accompanied him to the first stage, from whence they drove to Zurich, where, at the Sword Inn, he committed her to the care of a young lady, who was already there in readiness to travel with her to Russia in the capacity of governess.

It was now that he imparted to Liesli the particulars of her real condition and rank in life; and, greeting her at once as Countess Barczikoff, informed her that her grandfather was awaiting her arrival at home with the utmost impatience.

The hermit had already, through means of a banker at Zurich, provided clothes, equipage, attendance, and every thing necessary for her, according to the desire and command of the old count; and at the expiration of one short hour, the hermit accompanied the astonished girl to the carriage, and, giving the signal, it drove off. Long was it ere she could recover from the stupor into which this sudden change in her situation had thrown her.

“And from that moment,” I exclaimed, “the ladder, Mount Rigi, and your poor disconsolate friend, were all entirely forgotten!”

“No, no!” she replied, with the same true Swiss candour which she had always displayed; “on the very morning of my departure I besought the hermit from the carriage—did he not deliver it?”

“What—the Alpine rose?” I exclaimed. “Ah! yes;

*that* indeed I still retain ; nor has it ever been out of my possession since ; it ever has been, and ever shall remain, sacred to my heart. But, tell me, did he perform **ALL** that he was requested to do?" I inquired.

She appeared embarrassed, and for some time hesitated to reply ; but, as I still continued to press her, she said, with a downcast look, " Why, I observed the venerable man was not altogether prepossessed in your favour, and therefore I entreated him not to feel displeased with you, and insisted that he should inform you where I was, should he meet with you ; and I also requested him to write to me, stating whether or not he had spoken with you."

And as she gave utterance to the last few words, a burning crimson overspread her whole countenance.

" And has, then, the hermit written?" I asked.

She silently nodded, with her sweet Madonna-like head, in the affirmative.

" And did he write *all*—every thing?"

The countess replied to this by raising her eyes towards me with an expression of sweetness, mingled with soft confusion.

" The year, the term fixed by the hermit, has at length expired," I said. " During all this period you, and you alone, have lived in my heart. Now it is for you to decide—let me know my fate."

She was, however, only able to reply by tears of tenderness. She entreated me to rise, and then she continued seriously and solemnly:—

" My dear friend, you are the first and only one for whom my heart has ever pleaded. You swore love and fidelity to me when I was poor, and therefore it is that upon you I will rely—in you I will confide. It was in the little chapel of Schwytz, and whilst engaged in prayer, that I first beheld you—at the grave of my dear unhappy mother I first spoke with you ; and now I acknowledge the goodness of the wonderful Providence which has so

unexpectedly brought us here together, as it were, at the very extremity of Europe, and as if to prove that pure and faithful love will meet with an asylum every where."

At this moment the side-door opened, and in stepped—her grandfather! Well might the old count feel alarmed and astonished at finding his grand-daughter in company with a stranger! I trembled with fear, as if the angel of Paradise, with his flaming sword, stood before me.





## CHAPTER VIII.

**M**Y beautiful betrothed, having recovered herself, immediately introduced me to the count, as the friend of whom she had already spoken, and of whom the hermit had so often written, and but lately had communicated further particulars. She then modestly, and with blushes, added, that I was the friend with whom she now this very moment had renewed her former vows of faith ; and then, sinking on her knees, she fervently entreated her grandfather's paternal blessing.

The count, however, whose aged blood of seventy years flowed somewhat slower than ours, observed, with a smile, that there was assuredly no need of such very great haste, seeing the case was not so desperately pressing ; and giving me a most hearty welcome, he turned towards Liesli, and affectionately patting her cheek, soothed her with the assurance that we should have no reason to be dissatisfied with him, after he had known me a little better, and found me as worthy as he wished and hoped to do.

I was now obliged to relate the whole history of the shawl, of the finding of which it appears the servant who announced my arrival had already informed him ; which circumstance, however, both Liesli and myself had entirely forgotten, absorbed as we had been in the subject of ourselves. Liesli, it appeared, had not observed me, nor had she heard my cries in the crowd ; and, had I not ventured as I did upon the rash and sudden act which left her shawl in my grasp, doubtless I should have quitted St. Petersburg without having communicated with her at all. Thus on such slender threads hang so often the most important events of our lives !

It is unnecessary to say, that henceforward I was a daily and welcome visitor at the palace of the count. It is an old and well-known fact, that a grandfather is seldom able to refuse any thing to his grand-daughter; and in this case, indeed, it might be truly said, that not in all the fifty-one governments of Russia could such a yielding, doating, excellent grandfather be found as the old count.

After eight weeks had flown past, one morning the old count entered the room with a smiling countenance. He had just received letters by an extraordinary courier from the hermit, who had therein communicated the most satisfactory and complete information respecting myself, my person, circumstances, station, and character. It had concerned the happiness of his ward; and the hermit having accordingly laid aside his cowl, had set out, in the garb of a civilian, on a visit to my native country, to collect in person every information respecting my situation and family.

It was easy to be perceived, from the agreeable expression of the old count's features, that the hermit's inquiries had turned out to my advantage. At first he began to joke, and pretended to hint, from the contents of the letters he had just received, that my presence appeared highly necessary and was much desired in Germany. When, however, at this intelligence, the tears began to gather in the eyes of his beloved grand-daughter, he approached her, and, putting his arm round her waist, exclaimed, in his peculiar tone of kindness and affection, "Nay, my dear child, you must not weep, but rather smile and be happy. Behold," he continued, pointing exultingly to the letter, "now, I not only believe, but I am convinced, that this young man is worthy of you. There,"—he said, in an affectionate tone, taking the hand of Liesli, and conducting her to me—"there, my dear sir, take to your arms the child of my only beloved and lamented son, who fell for his country, and who now reposes in the native land of Liesli's mother, far—far distant from us. You are both

good and virtuous; live, therefore, as happy together as I once did with my never-to-be-forgotten Anna Iwanowa. May God bless you, and may his angels ever watch and have you in their holy keeping!"

Overwhelmed with grateful joy and surprise, we embraced the good old man; and for the last eight days Liesli has been my wife.

In the ensuing spring we intend visiting the venerable hermit, and the grave of Liesli's mother in the churchyard at Schwytz: from thence we shall proceed to my native country; and the rest—time will unfold.

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I have extracted the foregoing pages from the letters of my happy friend, the Baron Hermann von ——. How blest is he who gives his hand and heart to a poor girl, so rich as to bring the beloved husband a marriage-dower of innocence and virtue!—from such the blessing of Heaven will never be withheld.

The good hermit, in the meanwhile, has departed this life—for a better!





## Heinrich and Blanca.

### CHAPTER I.

NEAR to the banks of a solitary streamlet, whose murmuring, as it flowed through the deep shade to mingle its waters with the neighbouring river, was the only sound that broke upon the silence, there formerly stood a little mill. Here poor Magdalena often sat, and looked silently down, from the low window, upon the path which led through the bushes to her quiet dwelling. She was the widow of a miller who had recently died; and although, as the mother of three handsome, well-brought-up sons, she might be esteemed fortunate and happy, she now felt helpless and lonely, for all three were far distant from her. The eldest, the lively Hartung, having chosen his father's business, had set out

upon his travels, in search of employment. The slender Heinrich had been obliged to go to the wars; and the flaxen-haired Berthold had been taken by a cousin, when he was quite a boy, into the city, to be brought up to commerce, and now lived in a distant sea-port, where, in place of the waving branches of his native woods, a forest of masts, with their particoloured pennons, displayed itself in the harbour.

“ Oh, that one of my three boys would but return, to take care of me in my old age and helplessness !” Magdalena would often exclaim in her solitude.

One day she suddenly heard a joyful shouting, and sounds of horns bursting through the usually silent forest. Then a rural procession made its way from among the retreating bushes, and appeared, in the bright sunshine, to be approaching her cottage. She saw a magnificent carriage with four mettlesome, prancing horses, which, as well as the carriage, were finely ornamented with a profusion of fluttering ribbons, and they curved their proud necks, and beat the trembling ground with their powerful hoofs. The poor widow was quite dazzled by all this splendour and magnificence. She raised a respectful glance to the carriage, and observed in it a beautiful girl in a simple but very expensive attire, and beside her, glowing in all the vigour of manly beauty, was her eldest, her dearly-beloved son, Hartung. Then followed another splendid carriage, filled with musicians. The light and graceful Hartung instantly sprang from his seat, flew to his mother, fell on her neck, and said,—

“ Dearest mother, I am come to see you, to present to you my beautiful bride, and to say that you must go with us, and live with us for the future.”

The young bride, whose name was Barbara, and who had now descended from the carriage, repeated, with friendly greetings, the proposal of her husband. Magdalena could not, for a long time, recover from her joyful amazement.

"What happiness," at last she cried, "am I permitted to experience!" And she could not refrain from throwing glances of the most exquisite delight, now upon her manly, blooming son, and now upon her elegant and beautiful daughter. But as the newly-arrived visitors prepared to set out again, she said, with an anxious tone, "Dearest Hartung, will you leave the mill for ever, in which your lamented and good father lived so many happy years?"

"Oh, dear mother," answered Hartung, gaily, "speak no more of that. I have bought a much larger and finer mill on the banks of a broad stream; where three wheels fly as if in the air, while our own little one here turns itself about as faint-heartedly as if there was scarcely life in it; and you must know, dear mother, that I have obtained, not only a young and beautiful, but a very rich bride. Her father was a wealthy farmer, who had plenty of well-filled barn-yards, not far from the place where I latterly worked; and at little festivals, and other opportunities, I had the good fortune to gain her affections," he added, throwing a smiling look upon his young wife, who smilingly returned the glance of his sparkling black eyes. "When her father perceived," continued Hartung, "that I was really an honest and a well-behaved young man, he gave her to me, and with her a good rich dower; and so, dear mother, get ready to leave the little mill with us."

Magdalena truly rejoiced at the account of her son's prosperity, but she could not refrain from timidly replying, "But your poor father finished, and put it in its present state, with so much care and difficulty, and always wished so earnestly that one of you should retain it. Is it not possible for you——" she added, half aloud.

But here the young bride burst into a fit of laughter. "No, no, dear mother; how can you suppose it? how could I keep house in this little mill? It is not larger than our dove-cot."

She could now make no further opposition to the plan, if she would live with her children; and in silence she

collected her little effects together, and, amidst secret tears, bade farewell to the place where she had passed so many years in calm happiness.

The habitation to which she now repaired was many miles distant from the little mill in the wood, which soon became entirely waste and deserted. The wheel stood dry, and crumbled to pieces in the heat of the sun; the little rivulet murmured solitarily around the deserted walls, to whose inhabitants it had once so joyfully lent its assistance; the moss-covered roof fell in, and the rank grass waved over the court; and in the formerly neatly-kept garden the roses alone still bloomed triumphantly, and smiled amidst the ruin and desolation around. If a traveller wandered into this deserted spot, and the mill presented itself unexpectedly before him, he turned away with a shudder from a scene of such total desertion.

Magdalena, meanwhile, did not find, in living with her prosperous children, the love she felt towards them properly requited, although she endeavoured, with respectful, nay almost humble, attention, to fulfil the wishes of her stately daughter-in-law. Covetousness and selfishness were the principal features in Barbara's disposition. She had expected to find in the mother of her husband a useful and cheap assistant, and a careful attendant upon her children; but when she saw that sickness and infirmity hindered poor Magdalena from performing any domestic services for her, she considered her only as a useless burden. The lively Hartung had been, on the whole, a good son, but he never possessed a very feeling heart; and he now gave himself up so entirely to his wife, whose penurious disposition in some degree he shared, and occupied himself so incessantly about his own affairs, that he never observed whether his mother were well or ill treated; and Magdalena, unwilling to disturb the young couple by complaints, sighed in silence over the heavy labour which Barbara laid upon her. At length, when she found her strength entirely failing, she determined,

though with many bitter tears, to return to her poor deserted dwelling. The bustling Hartung heard of this with astonishment and displeasure; but when his wife assured him it entirely arose from his mother's obstinacy, he did not attempt any further hindrance of her departure. He took leave of her with clouded brow, and only paid her so much attention and respect as to send with her a supply of money and provisions.

The mill by this time had entirely gone to ruin, but Magdalena found in the poor little cottage a chamber sufficiently secured against the weather to shelter her. Here again she lived her former solitary but peaceful life; and if sometimes the brook, swollen by the rain, came raging down its rocky bed, and burst over the reedy margin, or the rushing storm threatened to tear the covering from her humble shelter, it was less terrible to her than the hostile glances which had been darted upon her from Barbara's angry eyes.

She had now become still poorer from this trial of a residence with one of her sons; but with increased anxiety she thought upon the other two, and involuntarily her thoughts always turned to the youngest, her fair Berthold—for, although she loved all her children with the deepest and truest maternal affection, yet Berthold was the darling of her heart, without her being aware of it. "He was so gentle and so beautiful," she sometimes repeated to herself, "that it is continually impressed upon my mind he will one day rise to fortune and distinction."

A long, joyless time had now passed away, and her provision began to fail. She knew not if her son Hartung, in his pursuit of wealth, had forgotten her, or whether his wife had estranged him from her altogether; but one morning, as she sat mournfully at her little window, looking out upon the glittering trees, tinged by the rays of the sun, and listening to the joyful twittering of the birds as they sought their food, she saw coming up the verdant path a traveller upon a handsome bay horse,



which gently raised its white feet over the wild shrubs that impeded its way. He stopped at the mill, dismounted, and, with delight, she recognised her beloved Berthold again. She was less astonished at his appearance than she had been at Hartung's, partly because her mind had been constantly occupied with him, and partly because he was less changed in appearance. He was as gentle as ever, and had not grown very tall; and, both in height and countenance, resembled a delicate fair girl. Like his person, his dress and manner partook of refinement and effeminacy, and caused the utmost surprise to Magdalena.

After a few tender embraces, Berthold said—"I am come, my dear mother, to shew you my wife and child, who follow me in a travelling carriage. I have to thank my Beate for all my present happiness. I possess a large and handsome house, and every thing that the situation of an eminent merchant affords. We were obliged to travel through this part of the country, and we have come a long way about in order to visit you, my dear mother."

While he was speaking, an elegant travelling-carriage appeared, in which was his wife, attended by a number of male and female servants. Berthold hastened to assist her from the carriage, and led her to his mother. She was as much like a fair picture as Berthold himself, only a little paler, and her ringlets approached more to the red. In the handsome and regular features of her countenance there was something, however, so proud and so disdainful—her pale lip bore so contemptuous an expression, that the poor Magdalena felt her heart could less rest upon her than upon the fiery and impetuous Barbara. But the baby, which Berthold took from an attendant, and brought slumbering in its lawn wrappings, was so like a wax doll, that she scarcely ventured to touch it; but, viewing it with looks of the tenderest love, she exclaimed—"The dear, dear child! Ah, I can never forget it!"

"What would you think, dear Beate," said Berthold, with some hesitation, "if my mother——We have so very large a house——"

But Beate threw upon him such a warning and side-long glance, he was immediately silent. The unsuspecting Magdalena had not seen this. It is a quality of the human heart, that, where it loves, it imagines all its feelings to be shared by the beloved object; and Magdalena did not, therefore, for a moment doubt that her own feelings were reflected in Berthold's bosom; but as she went into the adjoining chamber to procure something for the entertainment of her guests, she unexpectedly overheard the young lady say, not without some bitterness, to her husband,—  
"I must confess, I thought I had more dependence upon you. The old woman would really cut an excellent figure in our society! I am certain it could not be agreeable to herself; and I think my relations deserve something more from you than to carry about your origin as a show to the whole world; for, luckily, one would never discover it from yourself."

The young man was so flattered at the last part of the speech, that he acknowledged the proposal to be a very rash one, and begged pardon for having made it.

"Give or send as much as you please," added the lady, a little softened. "My father's fortune will not be so easily exhausted; only do not exact her presence."

Tears started from the eyes of the poor mother at these words; but, soft and patient as ever, she did not, by a single word, give indication of her feelings, and the departing pair easily mistook her bitter tears for those of grief at their separation. Berthold, who could not remain quite unmoved, pressed his purse into her hand, and promised to send her more. An internal feeling prompted her to throw back the proffered gift; but sad necessity, and the love which she still felt for the weak and wavering son who had almost disowned his kind parent, induced her to retain it, and she soon saw the

wheels of the carriage and the rider disappear amongst the trees.

Still deeper and more piercingly had this last experience torn her oppressed heart. "So—I have no longer a son!" said she, with anguish. Heinrich has certainly fallen in battle, for so my foreboding heart tells me;" and, as she sunk one night into a troubled slumber, she saw the confirmation of her fears in a dream. A fallen soldier lay upon a green field, his arms were scattered around him, and, from a wound in his side, his blood flowed darkly. The field was solitary and deserted; his comrades were far distant from him; the evening star alone looked down with pity upon him. She gazed on his face, and recognised the pale countenance of her Heinrich.

"Fare thee well, my son!" said she, awaking, while she pressed her folded hands upon her bosom, as if she would have pressed back the grief which was ready to break forth;—"thou hast at least gone hence without having deserted or disowned me!"

Her health now began to sink; the money which Berthold had left with her was at an end; and whether in the intoxication of his own happiness he had forgotten her, or distance had delayed the messenger, or from what other cause she knew not, no additional supply had arrived. The summer drew to an end, the leaves became tinged with a deeper shade, and the severe autumn approached, with its fanciful and shadowy images, and Magdalena trembled as she thought of the coming winter.

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## CHAPTER II.

**O**NE still and glowing autumnal evening, as Magdalena stepped to the door of her cottage, a form suddenly appeared among the green foliage, distinctly visible in the rays of the setting sun, like the figure of her fallen Heinrich, in his soldier's garb. The constant solitude of her life easily induced in the mind of the poor Magdalena a belief in apparitions, and she fancied she beheld the spirit of the dead before her. "I am come, my dearest mother," cried the soldier, hurrying forward, "to press you once more to my heart, after so long and bitter a separation;" and in another moment she felt herself clasped in the arms of her living son. It was indeed Heinrich, the slender Heinrich himself. She was now first aware of his faithful horse, which he led behind him by the bridle. It bent its neck as if it would have greeted her, and looked gently upon her with its large glancing eyes. She led the recovered dear one with delight towards the cottage, to rest and refresh himself; but, according to all true soldierly custom, he first begged to shelter his faithful horse, and to see it properly attended to. With renewed strength she now hastened into the little chamber to disperse by a blazing fire the cold autumn damps, and to do all in her power to provide for his entertainment and refreshment; and she could have wept that she had nothing better to offer; but joy this day maintained its triumphant and blessed sway.

In a short time Heinrich returned; and as the blazing fire threw its cheering light upon him and his military accoutrements, Magdalena could not refrain from turning her eyes constantly upon him, and admiring his fine, tall, handsome figure. His slender person had become more

manly and graceful, and the noble features of his countenance were also much improved. His bronzed cheek, tinged with the hue of health, well contrasted with the fire of his eyes. Those beautiful dark eyes, so expressive of truth and goodness of heart, could not be mistaken; and when he smilingly turned them upon her with looks of affection and deep feeling, it infused new life into the bosom of the sufferer, so long oppressed with grief.

"Ah, my son—my dearest son!" said she, drawing a deep breath: "only think, it is three months since in a dream I saw you lying bleeding and dying on the field of battle!"

"It is very true, my dear mother; it is just three months since I lay severely wounded upon the field. We had that day fought a great battle."

"Ah, my poor Heinrich!" exclaimed Magdalena; "when I remember how you were compelled to go to the wars in place of your brothers!"

The rigid and fixed grief which so long had restrained the overflowing of her anguish now gave way before the alleviating drops of maternal tenderness, which fell in showers down her pale care-worn cheek. Disquieting remembrances pressed upon her soul—how the lively Hartung, always full of life and spirit, had been the darling of his father, and the gentle Berthold hers—and how that Heinrich, as the easiest sacrifice they could make, had been sent to the army.

"Do not weep, my good mother," said Heinrich, sorrowfully, moved and grieved at the sight. "I love my honourable situation. I was fortunate enough, even in the first battle that we fought, to be raised from the condition of a common soldier, and to perform an essential service for one of our officers, who scarcely permitted me afterwards to leave his side, and from whose society and conversation I had often opportunities of acquiring knowledge and improving my mind. And in the last great battle, so much was thought of a few trifling deeds of arms

which I had been able to perform, that the path to the highest and most honourable distinction is now open to me. I merely take advantage of the present time, as there are proposals of peace, to visit you and my dear home again; for all intercourse with your part of the country was entirely cut off by these commotions. I have travelled day and night; and I can assure you, my dearest mother, that the sight of you, and the desolate situation of my paternal dwelling, has filled me with the deepest melancholy. I read all the sorrowful changes which you must have suffered here in your eyes; and it deeply grieves me that a poor soldier has no certain refuge to offer to his poor sick mother. Ah! the trifling little gift with which I thought to please you," said he, in a lower voice, reaching towards her, timidly and hesitatingly, the present that he had brought with him—"it is honestly and fairly won; but what avails such a trifle?"

Magdalena had stood in deep reflection, occupied only with one thought, arising from her son's speech.

"Will you also leave me?" said she, with a faint voice, and hung trembling upon his answer, as upon the sentence of life or death.

"Oh, dearest mother," answered the soldier, with sorrow, but with firmness, "my visit is a very hurried one. To-morrow, about this time, I must be again on my way. We remove to a distant part of the country, and I dare not fail in my duty."

He had scarcely ended these words, when the paleness of death overspread her countenance; and, with the expression of the most heart-rending agony, she raised her clasped hands imploringly towards him, without uttering a word; but her eyes, which sought his, spoke a silent yet powerful language.

"My mother, my good mother, compose yourself!" said Heinrich, full of anguish, while he endeavoured, by the most affectionate caresses, to comfort her.

"Oh, my son—my dear, my only son!" she at last

exclaimed, in a tone that smote him to the heart,—“oh, by all that is good, forsake me not! leave me not to neglect, contempt, and starvation!”

She then related to him, in a few impressive words, how the hearts of his brothers had been turned from her; and Heinrich felt too deeply how much worse than death it is to receive indignity where one has a holy right. The most painful struggle arose in his soul. The glorious path which lay before him, and promised to reward him for so many vexations and troubles—the duty which he owed to his honourable situation—all pressed upon him. But at last pity and compassion for his unhappy mother were victorious.

“No!” exclaimed he, overcome by emotion, “I can no longer— Judge Thou,” he continued, turning his eyes towards heaven,—“judge Thou, O merciful Father, between me and my duty as a soldier! I have often looked death in the face without fear, but the grief of my mother I cannot bear.”


The following day he was on his way back to the army, but it was to ask for his discharge; and he obtained it under the condition, that, should the war be renewed, he would rejoin the army. The mill now went merrily on once more, and resounded through the verdant solitude. Heinrich began anew his earliest employment, which he had only resigned for the animating profession of a soldier. Faithfully and amiably he now fulfilled the duties of his simple calling; and the ruined dwelling was soon restored to its former state by his active industry. The little brook ran gaily again in the dewy blushing mornings, with confiding loquacity, under his window and beneath the rustic bridge. A religious peace reigned in his heart, and his now happy mother partook of the same tranquillity. She revived under his care, like a half-decayed tree which some compassionate traveller has propped up. The maidens in the country around were soon aware of the return of the young man, who was now called, not merely the slender,

but the handsome Heinrich. Many a one would gladly have received him as a husband, but he took warning from the example of his brothers, and determined to preserve his heart, that he might live entirely for his mother, to whom he so earnestly desired to make amends for all her cares and afflictions. The only recreation which he allowed himself was to roam over the surrounding country, or to wander through the boundless forest. The beauties of nature presented to him many sources of exquisite enjoyment, particularly now that the severe winter had passed away, and the forest was again clothed in its verdant and magnificent apparel.

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## CHAPTER III.

T was late one evening, and Magdalena was at rest in her peaceful slumber. The mill, too, had ceased; and Heinrich hastened out into the warm summer night-breeze, breathing fragrance. The year was now in its highest beauty and perfection. The wild roses bloomed in profusion around the mill, and the wood formed so close a shade with its green arches, that not even a moonbeam, with its mysterious light, could penetrate them. Heinrich's path became so narrow, that the dew-dropping branches touched his youthful, blooming cheek. Lost in his own thoughts and feelings, he did not observe the darkness around him. Suddenly it seemed to become light, and an entrancing landscape lay before him, as if the dark trees of the wood had separated from each other, to shew him a valley of the greatest beauty, which he had not hitherto seen in any of his former rambles. The beauteous landscape swam in all the charms of the moon's silvery light. All was still, silent, and solitary, save a stream that murmured softly, half-surrounding the valley, and then lost itself among the cliffy rocks. A little village appeared faintly in the distance, in a hollow of the mountain that overlooked the forest. Upon the height, a fortress raised its battlements in irregular outline, half-hid by the trees, faintly glimmering in the moonshine, and melting away in the soft exhalations that hung over the whole landscape. Heinrich had advanced only a few footsteps, and stood entranced at the delightful view, when he heard a soft rustling in the bushes beside him, and a female figure stepped from amongst them, whose inexpressible beauty

and gracefulness filled the bosom of the youth with a tumult of delightful feelings he had never before experienced. She was in a simple white dress, but there was something in her whole mien and appearance that announced her to be of high birth. Natural ringlets fell round her lovely countenance, like the clouds that surround and half-veil the moon's pale face; her light step scarcely pressed the ground. She stood timidly still when she saw herself so near a young stranger, and looked anxiously around. This grieved Heinrich, and he took courage to say entreatingly, and with all true-hearted earnestness, "Do not be alarmed, noble lady. Rather than alarm you, I would entreat permission to guide you through this lifeless solitude."

The tone of his voice was so engaging, and the full moon shewed so distinctly to her his fine open countenance, that involuntary trust and confidence was infused into her heart.

"Who are you?" she asked. "I am almost inclined to accept of your friendly offer till I reach my attendant."

Heinrich told his name, and she consented that he should accompany her through the silent moonlit fields, both silent for some time as the still fields themselves.

The graceful unknown seemed to be lost in deep thought; but, rousing herself suddenly from it, she asked the situation of her guide. Heinrich related somewhat of his soldier-life, and his present employment.

"How!" cried she with surprise, standing still and observing him with an incredulous look; "you have resigned the noble situation which you appear to love so much, and have given yourself up to an ignoble employment?"

Heinrich stood before her for some minutes without reply. His youthful cheek was for a moment tinged with the blush of shame; but consciousness of the rectitude of his conduct quickly restored him to self-possession. He related to her in a few words, spoken with deep emotion,

the cause which had induced him to change his situation ; and as he added, that she might conceive how inexpressibly great had been the sacrifice which he had made to filial duty, he endeavoured in vain to restrain the tear which started to his manly eye. She also appeared deeply moved, and exclaimed in a tone as if carried away by her feelings, "Then I must indeed honour you!" It seemed as if a tear also gleamed in her eye ; but she turned hastily away, adding softly, "Farewell, noble youth ; for here comes my attendant."

At that moment Heinrich saw an old servant advancing towards her, whom she hastened to meet. From the manner in which she had bade him farewell, the naturally correct and just feelings of the young man intimated to him that she did not wish to be followed, and he respectfully obeyed ; while her graceful figure disappeared from the plain towards the little village, and seemed to him like the vanishing of a beautiful dream.

It was late in the night before he returned to the cottage. A gloomy day followed the luminous night, and thick rainy clouds obscured the heavens ; but Heinrich did not observe the darkness and gloom, for the light of the preceding night still remained in his soul. Even his mother remarked that there was a new and singularly joyful air thrown over his whole being ; but a secret, though artless, feeling made him silent upon the enchanting adventure. Towards evening, a courier arrived from the army, with the intelligence that the enemy had made a fearful irruption into the country, and that the safety of their fatherland demanded the immediate assembling of all true soldiers ; and Heinrich received commands to set out early on the following morning. The first emotion that arose in the bosom of the brave young soldier was, joy at the long-delighting call to battle, as strongly as the first blast of the trumpet roused his noble charger ; but when his eye fell upon his mother's pale cheek, he felt all that the summons would cost him. She was more

firm and composed, however, than he expected at his unlooked-for call of duty.

Heinrich put every thing in order for her sustenance and comfort during his absence; and, after having done all that filial piety prompted, when the composed and resigned Magdalena slumbered upon her couch, he gave himself up to the thoughts that, next to those duties, filled his soul. It fell heavily upon him that he must now be separated from the spot which contained so powerful an attraction. He longed to see the beloved valley once more, although the night was already so far advanced. The rain had fallen incessantly during the whole day, and the storm bent blusteringly the heavy branches; but Heinrich observed it not, and hastened into the dark wood. The weather had in the mean while cleared up a little as he reached the opening of the valley. The storm was now hushed, and the deep azure of the heavens, cleared and freshened by the continued rain, peeped here and there through the parting vapoury clouds, which only in their densest places still covered it with a half-stormy gloom. The moon, already beginning to decline, shed over the landscape a pale and melancholy light; and silence and deep solitude was over the whole country around, while Heinrich remained on the spot. She who had yesterday blessed his eyes with the most transporting vision did not now appear. He was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he could not, in so stormy an evening, and at so late an hour, have any expectation of seeing her, and that, in truth, their whole encounter was like a dream of his enthusiastic and romantic imagination.

He returned home, and early next morning was on his way to the army, after a parting, full of emotion and tenderness, from his mother.

The tumult and bustle of warlike activity which met him on his arrival involuntarily carried away the mind of the youth—ready for every brave and daring deed—and proved the most certain remedy against fruitless and wast-

ing thoughts. As the armies had already been opposed in a second bloody engagement, Heinrich had full opportunity to give convincing proofs of his courage; and when, in a short time, a glorious peace was concluded, he returned, with honourable testimonies of his merits, and the rank of a commander of a troop, to his beloved home. Anxiety and apprehension for his mother could not be extinguished in the bosom of this faithful son, even amidst the tumults of war. He opened the door of their little dwelling with a trembling hand; but his mother approached to meet him with joyful alacrity. She thanked God with fervency for the return of her beloved son, and assured him that she had wanted for nothing during his absence.

"And do you know the cause of that?" she said, mysteriously. "I will tell you," she added, observing Heinrich's inquiring look. But, with woman's benevolent kindness, she first busied herself in preparing some refreshment for him; then, seating herself at his side, she placed a basket before him, filled with rare fruits and flowers, and then continued: "You see there a token from her of whom I have to tell. As I sat sorrowfully, the evening after your departure, grieving myself with thinking *when* you would, or *if* you would ever, return, the door opened, and—indeed I may truly say—an angel entered. It was a young lady of so much beauty and sweetness of manner, that it seemed as if I had seen yourself. She brought me fruits, wine, and every thing that was necessary to strengthen and refresh me; and she did not forget to bring sweet and fragrant flowers with them. Every other evening she returned to visit me; and her affable, comforting conversation lightened my heart of its anxiety for you. She said Providence would certainly protect and guard you from danger, because you are so good a son. She seemed particularly delighted to speak of you, and she always made me relate something more concerning you; and thus passed the anxious time almost unnoticed away. Oh, if I could but always have the sweet angel near me!"

During this speech the heart of the young man throbbed impetuously. He instantly guessed this singular visitor; and much as his modesty struggled against it, he could not reflect without the most enrapturing delight upon the idea that she took some interest in him, and had performed such a heavenly, tender part in his absence. He threw himself into his mother's arms; but soon awaking from this intoxication of joy, he anxiously asked, "And have you never learnt the name of this amiable benefactress, dearest mother?"

"Only listen, child; you will not let me finish," said the good Magdalena; for Heinrich's impetuous caresses had broken in upon the regular course of her story. "Listen then: The miller from the neighbouring mill, whom you requested to take some little care of me and our property in your absence, came to see me, and I related the whole occurrence, and accurately described the stranger to him."

"Oh, mother, mother!" interrupted Heinrich, with anguish, "that was certainly contrary to the wishes of the young lady."

"Truly, it was so," answered Magdalena, somewhat embarrassed; "she had given me to understand as much. But, dear child, only think of my situation—my heart so full—so full of you—your absence, your danger—and then, so singular a visitor! I asked him if he could not conjecture who the lady was. 'It is the young baroness, who lives in the solitary castle on the mountain,' he answered. 'The castle has stood for a long time unoccupied, because the late baron had another residence on the sea-shore, where he and his daughter formerly lived; but, since her father's death, the young lady has withdrawn here, to live on his remembrance, and gratify her inclination for a calm and retired life, and indulge her pious and beneficent disposition.'"

Magdalena now expatiated long upon the happiness of her having been visited and comforted by so distinguished and amiable a person; but the fearful gulf opened before

Heinrich, that divided him from the object of his secret adoration. Ah! why was she so high above him in birth and rank?—she who, in his eyes, possessed such unspeakable fascination; every tone of whose soft voice, and every glance of whose heavenly eyes, had sunk so deep into his soul. His own feelings told him that the young baroness would now return no more to visit the solitary one; but to wander near where she lived, to express his warmest thanks for all her kindness to his helpless mother, became the most ardent purpose of his heart.

One beautiful morning, still fresh with dew, Heinrich went to the place where he had first seen the magical moonlight prospect. The pinnacles, which formerly had seemed to fade away in the soft moonlight, now gleamed brightly in the golden morning sun; the white walls and the glittering windows shone like diamonds upon the valley beneath. An emerald-green flower-covered meadow was close under the castle-rocks. Heinrich wandered along it. To the left, in a distant hollow, the little village, with its church-tower, was indistinctly visible; to the right was the majestic stream, as if strewn with spangles, glittering through the dewy exhalations, and winding round the castle-walls, till it was lost amongst the rocks upon the opposite side. Heinrich was now quite close under the lofty walls, and his eyes hung upon the splendid building. What a vision burst upon his delighted sight! She herself, the beloved mistress of the castle, appeared upon the highest part of the garden, which, broken by flowery terraces, reached from the castle down to the entrance of the valley. The graceful figure beamed like a celestial visitant in the glow of the morning; her glance appeared bright as light itself, and seemed to pass over the valley, and to rest upon the borders of the wood; but she did not observe Heinrich, whom a cluster of waving ash-trees concealed from her sight.

She now turned and descended the steps of the terrace to the lowest, which was broader and still more blooming

than the others, and which was only separated from the field by a light low railing. The noble Blanca walked innocently among the flowers of her garden. She raised her eyes, so full of mind and soul, and looked, not without some emotion, upon the slender figure of the young soldier, who had stepped to an opening in the fence, and, overpowered by his feelings at the sudden sight of her, leant for support upon a tree.

The baroness instantly recognised him, and, with unaffected sweetness, stepped forward, greeted him with courtesy, and invited him to rest within her grounds after his long morning's ramble. The affability with which she spoke, and a certain confidence and trust in her whole manner towards him, infused courage into Heinrich's heart. She made him sit down upon a verdant bank in the garden, and seated herself at a little distance from him. The simplicity and rusticity of manner, the consequence of Heinrich's birth, had been polished by constant intercourse with his brother-officers, but more so by the tender and ingenuous feelings with which he was endowed.

The invisible chain which drew the young baroness and Heinrich together was daily becoming closer and more firmly attached. He ventured to return to her again and again; but it was less by words than looks, and by the expressiveness of every glance and action, that he betrayed to her the feelings with which she had inspired him. When at last the timid confession broke from his lips, she replied, with emotion, but with firmness:

"I am the uncontrolled mistress of my choice, and possess this property by the will of my revered father; and I must acknowledge to you, noble Heinrich, that my heart distinguished you from the first hour of our acquaintance. A holy bond of union seemed early to unite us in the performance of the same duties—the duties of filial affection; and what more exalted offering could I bring to the memory of my lamented parent than so pious and devoted a son? It but required these honourable public



testimonies of your worth," she added with a blush, and glancing at the numerous orders which were upon his breast, "to justify the choice of my heart in the eyes of the world; and in bestowing my hand upon you, I feel I elevate and not degrade myself."

They pledged their faith; and from this time the now happy Magdalena lived in a heaven upon earth, rendered so by the tender cares of Heinrich and Blanca.

"I have but one wish more—only one," said the young baroness, as the day of her marriage drew near: "would that I dared hope for the arrival of my dear and long-absent brother upon that happy day!"

Her wish was granted, for this beloved brother unexpectedly arrived: he was, in truth, the noble officer who had so early acknowledged and rewarded Heinrich's merit. He joyfully accompanied his sister and her betrothed as they went to receive the Church's blessing at the altar, and clasped the newly married pair with fervour to his bosom.







THE SIGNAL ROCKET.